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AUTHOR Mallette, Malcolm F., Ed.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

The objectives of the American Press Institute Seminar, held in July 1976, were to examine problems related to declining newspaper readership and to discuss ways in which newspapers can be made more interesting and useful. This publication summarizes the major points set forth by each discussion leader and includes selected comments from participants. The following topics were discussed: reaching and holding the marginal reader; using news research to increase readership, achievement test scores, print and the TV-centered world of children, how people read, reaching the minority reader, newspaper in the classroom, graphics, techniques that work (a round table discussion), and a perspective. Included are lists of the seminar members and the members of the American Press Institute Board of Directors. (JM)

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A Seminar:

The Newspaper and Tomorrow's Readers

American Press Institute
Reston, Virginia

2

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The American Press Institute

The American Press Institute, founded in 1946, is a non-profit working center dedicated to the continuing education and training of newspaper men and women in the United States and Canada. Each year the Institute holds a series of Seminars, which are attended by experienced staff members from all departments of newspapers. The Seminars are held in the Institute's building in Reston, Virginia, 18 miles west of mid-town Washington, D.C.

The Newspaper and Tomorrow's Readers

Summary of an

American Press Institute Seminar

July 19-21, 1976

This summary was edited by Malcolm F. Mallette, Director; and Frank Quine and Arthur E. Mayhew, Associate Directors, American Press Institute, 11690 Sunrise Valley Drive. Reston, Virginia 22091.

Foreword

In July 1976, the American Press Institute held a three-day special Seminar on "The Newspaper and Tomorrow's Readers." The objectives of the Seminar were to examine problems relating to declining newspaper readership, including the level of reading ability in the society at large, and to discuss ways in which newspapers can be made more interesting and useful.

The Seminar was scheduled with the encouragement of the API Board of Directors. It was the hope of Board members that the discussions would benefit not only the participants and their newspapers but also, through wide distribution of this summary, be helpful to all newspapers.

The 33 Seminar members represented a broad range of geography, circulation, age, experience, and responsibilities. This was fitting to the problem under discussion, for it is increasingly clear that the readership problem can be attacked successfully only through a closely coordinated effort by all departments of the newspaper.

In arranging the Seminar program, the API staff sought Discussion Leaders who would present opinions and data extending beyond the traditional wisdom of newspapering.

The major points set forth by each Discussion Leader are summarized in this publication. Many of the points were discussed extensively, even heatedly. It was impractical to present all of the discussion by Seminar members. However, selected comments from members are included.

The American Press Institute is grateful to the members and Discussion Leaders who participated in the Seminar. API presents this summary with the hope that it will be useful to all newspaper men and women as they continually modify their newspapers to meet the needs and wants of a changing society.

Malcolm F. Mallette
Director
American Press Institute

Contents

Reaching and Holding the Marginal Reader	1
Using News Research to Increase Readership	9
Achievement Test Scores: Do We Need to Worry?	12
Print and the TV-Centered World of Children	15
How People Read: Facts and Misconceptions	17
Reaching the Minority Reader	19
Newspaper in the Classroom: First Dividends on a Long-Term Investment	21
Graphics: The Untapped Resource	24
A Round-Table Discussion: Techniques That Work	28
A Perspective: No Single Answer	42

The Seminar Members

Phillip H. Ault, Associate Editor, *South Bend Tribune*, South Bend, Indiana.
Barry Bingham, Jr., Editor and Publisher, *The Courier-Journal* and *The Louisville Times*, Louisville, Kentucky.
Kenneth J. Botty, Managing Editor, *The Evening Gazette*, Worcester, Massachusetts.
Maurice J. Buchart, Jr., Vice President and Director of Sales, *The Courier-Journal* and *The Louisville Times*, Louisville, Kentucky.
Bernard J. Buranelli, Deputy Managing Editor, *The Record*, Hackensack, New Jersey.
Don E. Carter, President and Publisher, *The Lexington Herald* and *The Lexington Leader*, Lexington, Kentucky.
King Durkee, Director, Department of Education, *Copley Newspapers*, La Jolla, California.
Michael R. Feldman, Marketing Manager, *The Toronto Star*, Toronto, Ontario.
N. Larry Freeman, General Manager, *Daily Press* and *The Times-Herald*, Newport News, Virginia.
Glenn E. Hanna, Assistant to Marketing Director, *The Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company*, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
Charles M. Hauser, Vice President and Executive Editor, *The Providence Journal* and *The Evening Bulletin*, Providence, Rhode Island.
Jack D. Hildebrand, Executive Editor, *Evening Herald*, Rock Hill, South Carolina.
Harry W. Hill, Assistant Managing Editor, *The Milwaukee Journal*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
Judith D. Hines, Manager/Educational Services, *American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation*, Reston, Virginia.
James W. Holton, Jr., Assistant General Manager, *The State* and *The Columbia Record*, Columbia, South Carolina.
Sanders H. B. Hook, General Manager, *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin.
G. Woodson Howe, Vice President and Executive Assistant to the President, *Omaha World-Herald*, Omaha, Nebraska.
Mark Ethridge, III, Assistant Metro Editor, *The Charlotte Observer*, Charlotte, North Carolina
Charles A. King, Vice President, *Ottaway Newspapers, Inc.*, Campbell Hall, New York.
Deborah Licklider, Living Editor, *Press and Sun Bulletin*, Binghamton, New York.
Diane MacLean, Supervisor of Educational Services, *Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association*, Toronto, Ontario.
William P. Maurer, City Editor, *Des Moines Tribune*, Des Moines, Iowa.
John B. Mauro, Director of Research, *Media General, Inc.*, Richmond, Virginia.
Milton J. Merz, Vice-President/Operations, *The Record*, Hackensack, New Jersey.
John H. Metcalfe, Assistant to the Editor, *The New York News*, New York, New York.
Perry E. Morgan, Publisher, *The Virginian-Pilot* and *Ledger-Star*, Norfolk, Virginia.
Robert H. Musselman, Jr., Business Manager, *Dayton Newspapers, Inc.*, Dayton, Ohio.
William F. Schmick, III, City Editor, *The Sun*, Baltimore, Maryland.
Gene F. Smedley, Managing Editor, *The Daily Pantagraph*, Bloomington, Illinois.
Crocker Snow, Jr., Assistant to the Publisher, *The Boston Globe*, Boston, Massachusetts.
Robert M. Stiff, Editor, *Evening Independent*, St. Petersburg, Florida.
James H. Wagner, Editorial Promotion Director, General Management, *Scripps-Howard Newspapers*, New York, New York.
Robert B. Whittington, Vice President, *Speidel Newspapers, Inc.*, Reno, Nevada.

Reaching and Holding The Marginal Reader

FREDERICK P. CURRIER
President
Market Opinion Research Co.
Detroit, Michigan

Reaching and holding the marginal reader requires a detailed review of key factors that are causing apparently growing numbers of men and women to read daily newspapers on a less-than-daily basis.

If newspapers understand where they are, they can better choose how to get where they want to go.

Each newspaper must determine the extent to which its circulation problems are general for all newspapers, and the extent to which the problems grow from the particular market. Some aspects of declining readership are fairly general; others vary with the market, particularly with market size. Table No. 1 (page 3) lists some factors to consider in analyzing a problem of declining readership.

Newspapers also should understand the enduring strengths of print and of newspapers in particular. On the other hand, newspapers must appreciate the variables that will limit the degree of success achievable in reversing declining readership trends.

The financial base of most newspapers continues to show great strength, largely because of their uniqueness to local retailers. The readership base of newspapers appears to be under much heavier attack than the advertising base, which has not yet been affected by declining readership.

The amount of money being spent for newspapers in 1976 by readers and advertisers combined is growing at 12 per cent annually. Other media—television (10%), radio (9%), magazines (4%), book-publishing (10%), and motion pictures (3%)—are experiencing a similar steady growth in revenue. Cable is the one exception—with an annual growth rate of 15%.[1]

One limitation for all media is the percentage of disposable income

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Frederick P. Currier has 18 years' experience in consumer research and media market analysis. In recent years he has conducted studies of more than 85 daily and 70 Sunday newspapers. He was a co-founder of the ANPA Bureau of Advertising Research.

adults and their households are willing to spend for information, which may be news or entertainment. In the United States this percentage has been four to five per cent and has remained relatively flat over a period of years.[2]

When media revenue gains (corrected for inflation) are relatively small and disposable income spent on information is flat, media interaction is a central problem in newspaper circulation and readership. Each medium is fighting for a share of the consumer's time and money. And compared to the revenue of other information industries, the newspaper dollar base is a large and inviting target for its competitors.

For newspapers, the danger of competitive news cannot be emphasized too strongly. If network and local TV news increase, the number of pages of newspapers increases yearly, and magazine pages increase yearly, while the number of radio stations increases, then something has to give.

Changing lifestyles are also a consideration. Of all households in the United States, 22 per cent now have only one adult.[3] In many single-adult households in particular the adult arrives home, turns on the television, radio, or both, and scans the newspaper at the same time. This simultaneous input from more than one medium is an increasing factor in declining newspaper readership.[4] Also, single-adult households are harder to sell a newspaper subscription to and often hard to collect from.

The probability of a sale to a one-adult household is obviously less than to a multi-adult household.

Media output is easier to measure than media consumption. Newspapers measure in copies produced and pages printed. Television and radio surveys measure the hours a receiver is turned on, or potential consumption. Multi-media input to a household distorts measurements of actual consumption. Information output is increasing—more pages in newspapers, more hours of television viewing, more copies and pages of books and magazines, and more radio stations.

There is question, however, whether consumption of information is keeping pace with unit output. Are people buying the newspaper but not reading it, turning on the TV set but not comprehending, buying magazines but only scanning them quickly?

Perceived time is critical for media and especially for newspapers. Perceived time is the amount of time a person *thinks* he spends on an activity as opposed to what he actually spends. Consequently, if a reader thinks a newspaper will take too long to read, he is less likely to read it at all. Studies tend to show a flat commitment of time by adults or households for information.[5]

Table I. Variables Associated with Declining Newspaper Readership

Product-Oriented "Causes"	Criteria
1. Content	Change in kinds of content through time
2. Size of product	Increase in gross size of product
3. Type size and column width	Change in type sizes and column widths
Basically Social or Market "Causes"	
1. Mobility of younger people	Increase in mobility
2. Values of younger people	Change in values relating to institutional values
3. Crime	Increase in amount of crime
4. High-rise apartments/ Availability of medium	Increase in number of high-rise apartments
5. Age distribution	Increase in size of young-adult and middle-aged population groups
6. Racial	Increase in racial share of adults
7. Education	Increase in amount of education
8. Family composition	Increase in number of one-person households
9. Product pricing	Increase in price
10. Working women	Number of adult females in labor force
11. Not-at-homeness	Per cent of time adults at home
12. Consumer expenditure for mass media	Constant dollars spent by households on mass media/each medium
13. Time spent by adults on media	Constant time spent on mass media and each medium—TV, radio, magazines, books, movies
Basically Human Causes	
1. Vision	Increased vision problems
2. Literacy	Change in rate of literacy based on vocabulary
3. Reading	Change in ability to read
4. Scanning	Increased ability to scan
5. Comprehension	Change in comprehension based on words/sentences
6. Language barrier	Change in adults' ability to speak/ read English

There is no conclusive evidence that a bulky newspaper is a negative factor in readership. However, some studies have shown that about 20 per cent of persons surveyed cite newspaper bulk as a problem.[6] Perceived time underscores the importance of good organization and indexing of the newspaper so that the reader can quickly and easily find what he is seeking and then shop through other sections as he chooses.

The bulk of the Sunday newspaper may be less critical because television and radio are not as strong competitors for reader time on Sunday morning as they are at other periods. There is some evidence that the marginal reader is more inclined to read the Sunday newspaper.

Newspapers should work harder to put across the message that readers can get large amounts of information from the newspaper in 10 to 15 minutes and less. Current reader perception—perceived time—is that much longer periods are needed. The newspaper is not that formidable. It is much more efficient than it seems to be.

Newspapers are a superb scanning device because of their size and the ability of the human eye. The eye can scan at incredible speed. For that reason alone, print will always be a strong medium. The reading sequence is to search, turn to, scan and commit—that is, begin reading text. Research is probably distorted by persons who scan a newspaper thoroughly and then tell a researcher they haven't read it—and also by those who claim they read the newspaper when they only glanced at it.

Newspapers can be read at the chosen speed of the reader, whereas television and radio are linear media and demand constant attention to achieve the greatest impact. Still, in all markets, "not enough time to read" is a major reason for circulation stops. Thus, perceived bulk, or organization of content, is a problem.

Recent research figures in metropolitan Detroit show that newspaper readership is weakest in the 18-to-24 and 25-to-34 age groups. One theory has it that the reading habit for individuals will increase as they marry and settle into a community. Research in the Detroit area seems to suggest, however, that for central city metropolitan dailies at least the non-reading habit may carry over into the later age groups.

Between 1975 and 1980, the 18-to-24 age group in the United States is expected to grow from 31 million to 36 million—and by 1980 will constitute some 23 per cent of the total population. The second largest age-group gain will be in the 35-to-44 group, with a projected age-group increase from 23 million to 26 million. These two age groups, therefore, are prime media targets.

Three factors seem to be contributing to declining readership of newspapers by young adults: (1) time spent watching TV, (2) mobility, and (3) one-adult households.

Although those who watch television news extensively are also likely to read newspapers, total time available may deter newspaper reading. Young adults have an astonishing mobility rate. In some communities, 50 per cent of young adults move each year. As noted earlier, one-adult households are much more difficult to sell newspapers to than multi-adult households.

Further, the whole problem of delivery stops and starts is not faced by radio or TV. Local data on mobility is helpful in assessing circulation problems. Each newspaper should determine whether stops (and starts) only equal or exceed this "natural" turnover of young adults and others within its community.

People magazine is a successful new product destined to reach the young adult market. The stories are short and contain nothing depressing, body type is large and pictures are abundant. In People there are no losers or tragedies. The success of this magazine raises a question whether Sunday magazines in newspapers could or should use a similar approach.

For newspaper managers, the most critical decision of all in approaching readership problems is the mixture of news that goes into the newspaper—the basic strategy. Three concepts are available, and a strategic choice must be made for each local market:

1. The all-purpose newspaper, one that attempts to provide all information for all people. The goal is to provide the best national, international and local coverage, the best sports section, the best lifestyle news, etc. This is the ultimate "horizontal" newspaper, the total newspaper; it assumes that few readers also take any other newspaper.

2. The newspaper that drops "down" in the market place, usually under the pressure of a competing metropolitan newspaper, and moves toward more local coverage. This newspaper does not attempt to be all-purpose and leaves that role to the metropolitan competitor, particularly in terms of national and international coverage. A subset of this paper is one that is filled entirely with local news.

3. The newspaper that creates new products to appeal to various readership segments. Several "vertical" or special interest elements can be included in the package. That kind of newspaper is conceived of as a group of vertical elements or sections. The Wall Street Journal is an example.

The all-purpose newspaper (No. 1 above) can also create content to attract a vertical audience, for example, through an extensive financial section.

Newspaper circulation declines are usually more of an individual market problem than a nationwide problem, and the strategy of attack

must be devised according to individual market needs. (An examination of circulation trends in large industrial states shows the largest and smallest circulation size groups have been losing.) When new products—sections, supplements, etc.—are created, newspapers should set up focus groups and other research projects to measure their effectiveness.

A newspaper must have a well defined product philosophy—an understanding of what it is trying to be. Then a strategy must be developed for selling the newspaper. Readers will assimilate only as much information as they want. They must derive a sense of reward and satisfaction or they will not continue the reading habit. The 18-to-34 age bracket is the one of most concern.

Information is increasingly easy to get. Newspapers must become increasingly attractive to hold their share of the market.

Meanwhile, individual television stations will become more vertical—that is, more specialized in their kinds of news or entertainment. As this happens newspapers will have to decide whether to become more vertical or hold to the traditional horizontal strategy. The best answer will probably vary with the community and market. In all communities, however, the newspaper must promote the ease with which information may be acquired by reading a newspaper.

Footnotes:

1. U.S. Department of Commerce, "Printing and Publishing," "Broadcasting," U.S. Industrial Outlook, (January, 1976), pp. 295, 321.

2. McCombs, Maxwell E., "Mass Media in the Market Place," Association for Education in Journalism, (August, 1972).

3. Bryant, Barbara E., "The Impact of Changing Life Styles on Survey Data Collection," American Marketing Association, 59th International Conference (June 8, 1976).

4. Currier, Frederick P., "Scanning and Media Involvement," Advertising Research Foundation Conference, Chicago, Illinois (May 20, 1976).

5. Robinson, John, "Cross Cultural Study on Leisure Time and Media," Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.

6. Current Market Opinion Research studies for private newspaper clients, (1975-76).

The following comments by members Don E. Carter and King Durkee were made during the course of the presentation by Frederick P. Currier.

Don E. Carter: We should adopt for our newspapers those factors in the popular publications that are appealing and which we think we can philosophically live with. We should not go all the way and become individual National Enquirers. I don't perceive of that as the role of my newspaper.

I think we must not forget that the newspaper has an obligation to inform the people. We can accept that as our first tenet. Beyond that, we must turn to those factors we think are most appealing and will tend to preserve the continued readership of newspapers.

I get awfully upset seeing the deceptive build-up by a magazine of a marginal story about Jackie Onassis for instance. This bothers me as being violently anti-professional.

But there it is. So how can we respond to that kind of thing within our framework and our philosophies? What can we learn from the techniques some of the popular publications use, not necessarily the subject matter?

Can we use larger type and make newspapers easier to read? Can we show faces of people and pull readers into the newspaper that way? Can we print our newspapers so that we can easily see what we are trying to read? Can we write in such a way that we compel the reader to read? Can we avoid the big blobs of type that turn readers off? Can we break up type units with subheads and interesting devices which make it more readable?

These are the lessons that we can learn from those kinds of publications.

King Durkee: Let me back up what another member said a minute ago when he used the word panic. I think panic is something we must guard against when we talk about change.

I think there should be change, but in my judgment it should be in packaging more than in content. The worst thing about our newspapers is the way they are written, and that's probably the element upon which we spend the least time trying to change.

The other media are not happy with what's happening to them either. If we try to copy the other media, that's panic. We should look at what we think isn't right about ourselves. We must not make changes at the expense of throwing out the fundamental purpose of a

newspaper. And the fundamental purpose of an American newspaper is to print all the news necessary to individuals who must have enough accurate information to participate effectively in the process of self government. And I'd remind everyone that Jefferson thought that, too.

The public sees television news as entertainment, even if they're watching Walter Cronkite. I don't think the public feels that way about us. I think the public expects us to come up to a certain mark. When we don't, when we fall into the realm of coverage similar to that found in People magazine or The National Enquirer, I think we've lost our identity as a daily newspaper that has endured all these hundreds of years. We have to solve our problems without losing our identity.

Using News Research To Increase Readership

JOHN B. MAURO
Director of Marketing Research
Media General, Inc.
Richmond, Virginia

The erosion of newspaper readership has resulted largely from a decreased frequency of reading and not in a growth of hard-core non-readers. Research demonstrates that the erosion of readership is found in all adult age groups in varying degree and not solely among young adults.

Over a period of years the pattern for many readers has been a switch from reading two newspapers a day to first one newspaper a day and—now increasingly—sporadic or non-daily reading of one daily newspaper.

Studies show that only about ten per cent of adults never read a newspaper and probably cannot be converted to readers no matter what changes are made in newspapers. Thus newspapers would be well advised to concentrate on the increasing percentage of sporadic or marginal readers, attempting to convert them to a daily reading habit. Editors would be better equipped to bring about such conversions if they had a better understanding of the variables in content and reader preferences that affect readership.

Stimulus-oriented research holds promise of giving editors that improved understanding. Most newspaper readership to date can be characterized as response-oriented. Data on demographics, lifestyles and attitudes fall into the response-oriented category.

Stimulus-oriented research has the potential of establishing predictability tables for readership of certain kinds of stories. After a pioneering project in stimulus-oriented research that took four years, John Mauro does not envision a time when editors will subject each piece of news copy to a computerized evaluation. Mauro does con-

John B. Mauro was a research analyst for various newspapers and magazines before becoming director of research for Media General Inc., publishers of newspapers in Richmond, Tampa and Winston-Salem, N.C. He is the current president of the International Newspaper Promotion Association.

tend, however, that editors using guidelines established by stimulus-oriented research could predict fairly accurately the readership each story would receive under certain conditions of display, length of text, etc.

As the base for his stimulus-oriented research, Mauro used a standard recognition readership survey of The Tampa Tribune. The recognition-basis survey involves showing a copy of the previous day's newspaper to respondents, who tell which headlines, stories or parts of stories they read. Results are then compiled on percentage of male and female readership, etc. This kind of survey is routinely used by many newspapers and has great value in itself.

Using a computer and a technique called factoring, Mauro established a predicted readership level for each story in the newspapers surveyed. The predicted readership level took into consideration the display position in the newspaper, headline size, quadrant on the page, use or non-use of art, byline, hard news vs. column or feature, etc.

All stories were also categorized as to subject matter, for example: government (local, state, etc.), crime/accident, military/war, business, general service (TV logs, weather, movie logs, obituaries, personal advice, topics of social concern, sports, etc.).

Then the predicted readership level was compared with the actual readership levels and conclusions were drawn on variations.

Mauro concluded that there are three broad categories of readers, each drawn to a newspaper for different reasons:

- The largest number of readers turn to newspapers mainly for diversified current events reporting.
- A second group of readers turns to newspapers for human interest coverage and daily reference or service information.
- The third group turns to the newspaper largely because of sports coverage and has little interest in the rest of the newspaper.

Mauro also concluded that young adults are not given enough credit for their broad range of intellectual interests. He found that young adults sample a wide variety of subject matter and the sampling differs with each young adult. On the other hand, older adults become more fixed in their interests and sample a narrower range of stories.

The research indicated to Mauro that the advertising content on a page can influence the readership of the news content on the same page or a facing page. The advertising contributes to a so-

called page environment.

Mauro suggested that there are both advantages and disadvantages to grouping of stories by subject matter or establishing several specialty sections. Such grouping, he said, makes it convenient for the reader to find what he wants, but the reader then may pass up other sections in which he might also find stories of interest by scanning through. This thesis generated extensive discussion by Seminar members, many of whom strongly favored more grouping of related stories.

Mauro said newspapers must invest in more stimulus-oriented research and his project only scratched the surface. He acknowledged that predictability tables would be too cumbersome for editors to use precisely in handling each piece of copy. However, he contended that through the study of such tables editors can improve their editing skills and thus increase readership of the newspaper.

Achievement Test Scores: Do We Need to Worry?

DAVID E. WILEY
Co-Director of the ML-Group for
Policy Studies in Education
CEMREL, Inc.
Chicago, Illinois

A Ford Foundation-sponsored study by Wiley and his wife, Annegret Harnischfeger, found achievement test scores in the United States increased steadily over three decades through the mid-1960s. Since then, scores have dropped on several major tests.

Declines have been especially pronounced in verbal and mathematical skills, with verbal skills declining most among females, a surprising reversal of form. There have been some exceptions, as in science skills, but most of the achievement test scores have been dropping.

When do the test scores decline?

The declines start for students at the fifth grade and continue through high school.

Possible reasons: The curriculum for pre-kindergarten through fourth-grade pupils stresses tested basic skills. Television, which for older children may be detrimental, actually may be beneficial for younger ones, helping them to grasp concepts, to learn words, and to broaden their knowledge in many areas.

Why are the achievement declines most pronounced in later grades?

For several likely reasons, including:

- More time spent in television viewing (for entertainment rather than information).
- Students taking fewer basic courses and more electives.
- Increased participation in so-called "work-study" courses, where students have a job in the afternoon rather than taking certain courses. These jobs often help count toward graduation requirements but are many times not counted as courses, per se.

David E. Wiley is on leave from the University of Chicago where he is an associate professor of education and of behavioral science. He is engaged in research on the uses and meaning of test results, on educational goals and on the content and conduct of classroom instructions.

A major factor in declining scores.

Changing school curricula in the past 10 years is probably the major factor in declining achievement test scores. Here are some statistics for the period of 1970-73:

- English enrollments are down 15 per cent; U.S. history courses are down 7 per cent, state history down 14 per cent.
- Math courses are down 15 per cent. Physics is off a staggering 30 per cent; chemistry courses are down 10 per cent. (Even more shocking: there has been a 90 per-cent increase in those taking remedial math during the 1970-73 period.)
- There has been a sizable drop in the proportions of pupils enrolling in the traditional basic college preparation courses: algebra, first-year foreign language, chemistry and physics.

Some other school-related changes that might affect the scores.

By 1968, the percentage of students who drop out of school between the fifth grade and high school graduation had declined to 25 per cent. The decreased dropout rate may affect tested achievement, since low-achieving students are presumably staying in school longer.

Have the tests changed?

Tests are still oriented toward the time 10 years ago when the schools' curricula were more homogeneous in nature. For example, a test might contain 80 items on biology, physics and chemistry. Now fewer students are taking these basic courses and more students are taking elective and specialty courses such as ecology. The tests, however, don't match the increasingly varied course content.

Do we value diversity in the various school systems or do we want to return to a more structured, homogeneous institution? This is as much a political question as it is an educational one. (For example, so-called "back-to-basics" schools probably will produce students who will score higher on achievement tests because the tests are structured along basic skills lines.)

Have the types of persons taking the tests changed?

Not substantially.

Are the tests graded or scaled differently now than earlier?

Another no.

What, then, is responsible for the decline, in addition to changes in the curriculum?

Some of the major reasons advanced concern change in the society. Among the possible factors are:

- A large increase in drug and alcohol use among high school students and younger.

- A reduction in time devoted to homework, possibly because of time spent watching television.
- Changes in American family life. More adult females are in the work force, including many mothers of school-age children. The number of divorce-broken or one-parent homes is on the rise.
- The post-World War II baby boom. Does the parent age structure or children born closer together affect learning?
- Teachers: Many are young and inexperienced and products of the mid-1960s school problems. (One member of this Seminar said his city school district's tests for incoming teachers found them with an 7th to 9th grade educational level.)

Test score declines: So what?

The declines are real but not necessarily bad, according to Wiley. Tests do not show what else the student is learning that is not tested. Have students improved in effectiveness of public debate and speech? Have they gained in understanding of aesthetic issues such as art and music? Perhaps communities want their school districts to offer special courses—in ecology or the arts or black history—that are not tested on national achievement tests. What are the advantages of out-of-school learning experiences? Do tests pick them up?

Do the declines account for the loss of newspaper circulation?

No. The gradual achievement test score declines in reading skills cannot account for the substantial declines in newspaper circulation in the last two years.

More likely, the circulation decline is due to the content of newspapers, a distrust of institutions (including newspapers) and other changes in society.

What should be the role of the newspaper in attacking these problems?

Be concerned about what is going on in the schools. The scores do reflect problems in the schools.

Determine if the tests measure what your community wants from its school system. More debate is needed on what children should be learning: career education versus college preparatory. Again, this can be more a political question than an educational one. Parents—and taxpayers—pushing for more college prep courses may not think highly of a school board or administration pushing for career education courses.

The future?

The high school graduates of today who are poor readers will continue to be poor readers. They have already gone through the system.

And they are the next generation of parents.

Print and the TV-Centered World of Children

BRUNO L. CALIANDRO
Director, Communications Group
Bank Street College of Education
New York, New York

The greatest opportunity for newspapers to develop the reading habit is among 8-to-12-year-old children. This age bracket bridges the fourth and fifth grades, where achievement scores have remained stable, and the early teens where the most dramatic—and unexplained—drop-offs occur in reading.

The idea is to work with children during their most productive learning years to forestall later drop-offs in interest.

Newspapers would benefit by setting aside specific space for this pre-teen-age group, just as they do for sports and business. Advertising could be sold in connection with it. A Dear-Abby-type column, for instance, could be tailored to childrens' needs.

The 14-to-16 age group is one in which kids begin moving into their own world. But newspapers aren't the only losers here. Churches and many other institutions lose children at this stage of life. They return to the more traditional habits and lifestyles in the early to mid-20s when they marry and begin to settle into their own households.

Many traditional teaching techniques are not working as well as they once did. Children seem to want to be entertained in the learning process. Today's children find it difficult to concentrate and are easy to distract.

Today's children seldom initiate projects on their own; they expect quick results without much work and have little tolerance for delay. For example, children prefer a stapler to paste "because it's faster." They live in an "instant-on, instant-off" world.

Time and distance values have changed drastically, and the pace of life is influenced by the speed of information transmission and by new technology.

Bruno L. Caliandro has produced more than 60 film and television shows and has been a consultant to all three major commercial networks, primarily on children's programming. Bank Street College is a pioneer in communicating with children, having developed numerous textbooks, toys and other educational tools.

The sense of pride and accomplishment in learning something, sometimes painstakingly, has faded in favor of the immediate action and reaction that comes from pushing a button.

For better or worse, television is more and more a factor of young people's lives. Pre-school children devote huge amounts of time to watching television. During the school years, more time is spent watching television than is spent in a classroom.

Some educators feel that the passive nature of excessive television-watching causes a loss of pride in personal involvement, achievement and productivity, and that excessive television-watching impedes reflective and creative thought.

Television is receiving much criticism today for its children's programming, but newspapers aren't being criticized. The reason: newspapers aren't doing anything for children.

Of the current newspaper content, the following items (not necessarily in order) seem to have the most appeal for children in the middle-years groups:

- Horoscope.
- Advice columns (Dear Abby, Ann Landers).
- Sports pages.
- Sex and violence in the news columns.
- Incredible developments in any area. (Children love trivia, too, and contribute greatly to the vast sales of the Guinness Book of World Records.)

The Bank Street College of Education, a pioneer in communicating with children, has plans to tackle the problem of reading. The college has announced that it will test-market a Sunday newspaper magazine supplement for the whole family.

The supplement will be called "3 to Get Ready." It will be divided into three sections: the *Pinwheel Papers* for pre-reading children from 4-to-7 years old; the *Now Show* for the 8-through-11 reading group; and the *Almanac* for parents.

The 32-page monthly supplement will be built around a central but different theme each month. Newspapers using the supplement will also publish a weekly black-and-white page, an extension of the magazine.

If "3 to Get Ready" is a success, Bank Street may undertake a syndicated half-hour television special of the same name so that print can relate to broadcast and vice versa, something that has never been done effectively before.

How People Read: Facts and Misconceptions

CAROLYN L. BURKE
Associate Professor of Education
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

Newspaper editors are doing a much better job than they usually give themselves credit for. The needs of readers are changing, and readers are demanding more and different things from their newspapers. By and large, editors are taking action to meet these new demands—with changed content, graphics, delivery times, etc.

Reading is not in danger of fading away. Reading is pleasurable, and people do want to read. Newspaper people don't always understand the almost universal interest in reading; they worry that they work with a process that appeals only to a relatively select few. If newspaper people do not look upon the reading process as pleasant and write and edit accordingly, they cannot expect others to find pleasure in reading their newspapers.

Also, editors should not assume that watching television is pleasurable and reading newspapers is not. If readers do not find pleasure in their newspapers, the fault lies in the selection of content and the craftsmanship of writing.

Time spent viewing television does not necessarily make poor readers of those viewers. In fact the additional background obtained by watching television often improves reading comprehension. (Other research has shown that people who watch television news most are usually regular newspaper readers.)

There are limits to reading ability for each individual. The limits are rooted in each person's background and experience as well as in his or her use of reading strategies. Accordingly, writing which is clear in the writer's mind may be misunderstood by the reader. Even skilled readers subconsciously make changes in the written text (these are called miscues), but reading miscues don't always change the author's

Carolyn L. Burke has been a consultant on various reading programs and has written numerous articles and research reports on reading. One of her major areas of study is psycholinguistics, the study of language as conditioned by psychological factors.

message. For example, an author might write "fire engine" and readers might perceive that as "fire truck." The misperception doesn't really change the meaning of the sentence.

The reader cannot always learn from reading a given passage. A person can learn only when he can relate the text to something that is already understood. The reader may be able to pronounce a word but not have any idea what it means. A reader is thus limited; he takes out of reading only the experience he brings into it or acquires as he moves through the passage, helped by a skilled writer who understands the limitations.

The most effective writer is one who involves the reader in a story. Reader involvement is brought about in several ways. The writer should concentrate on the message (the story) rather than the structure. Information should be organized in relation to the message. Not everything can be crammed into the lead.

Predictability also is important; that is, the reader should be prepared for the next step. New material should be introduced in a manner and setting the reader is accustomed to. The writer should always assume the reader is intelligent and not write down to him. Supply all information that will help the reader expand the concept being presented. Writing should be straightforward, never cute.

Redundancy differs from repetition. Redundancy is helpful, repetition is not.

Repetition occurs when the writer tells the reader the same thing twice, for example at the beginning and end of a story. In contrast, redundancy is supplying several alternate clues or examples to clarify a story and thus enlarge readership. Generally speaking, the more examples used the wider the appeal of the story.

All writing is non-objective; stories are colored by the writer's experience. Neither are there neutral observers. The reader and writer have the right to come to the information from different points of view.

It is nonsense that longer sentences are necessarily harder to read than short ones. The important question, again, is the message the writer is attempting to get across. A writer can become so concerned about using short words and sentences that he forgets what he is trying to say. The writer should ask this question: What are the relationships that must be conveyed? They should be constructed—at whatever length—to convey that relationship.

Reaching the Minority Reader

WILLIAM RASPBERRY
Columnist
The Washington Post
Washington, D.C.

For people who struggle daily to survive, newspapers have little importance. These people—be they whites, blacks or members of various racial or ethnic groups– are deeply worried about food, clothing and shelter. They do not view newspapers as relevant to their lives; they don't think they are missing anything.

Still, there are certain actions, both short-term and long-term, that newspapers can take to increase readership among people who exist at the survival level. The resulting increase in readership will be modest at best, however. In the foreseeable future, the readership picture among these segments of the population is bleak.

The recent history of coverage of blacks helps illustrate one aspect of the problem. Beginning with its coverage of the civil rights movement in the South in the early 1960s, the white daily press sharply improved its reporting of the black community. Through such improvement, the white press virtually preempted the black press as a means of communication for blacks. Lately, however, the white daily press has begun to lose ground to television.

Television is currently doing a better job—not in depth reporting or in providing background—but in presenting the news in brief, easy-to-digest fashion. Many blacks (and indeed many other people) want no more than this brief presentation.

Newspapers publish an incredible amount of fluff. Non-readers have sensed that. They recognize attempts to make news out of non-news events. For example, reams of copy are produced telling what might happen at a city council meeting. Next come stories telling what actually happened. This hard news is followed by stories and editorials explaining the significance of the actions.

Such saturation coverage means little or nothing to the person who was not interested in the subject to begin with, the person who is worried about his very existence for the next 24 hours.

William Raspberry has held a variety of writing and editing positions since joining The Washington Post in 1962. Since 1965, he has written a column emphasizing problems of people in the city.

Thus, more thorough coverage of the news—doing the job better—offers no assurance of increased readership among hard-core non-readers.

There are other coverage problems. White newspapers tend to cover black-related stories (this could apply to other minorities) when they intersect with white interests. Newspapers "discovered" the Watts area of Los Angeles only after riots erupted there.

Hiring black reporters for a newspaper staff will not change the content so as to be more appealing to blacks if the black reporters are directed by white editors. To increase their appeal to black readers, newspapers need to have editors and other supervisors with a variety of backgrounds and interests.

If there were more black editors on newspapers the overall philosophy of coverage would change and in turn reporting assignments would change. This kind of change might not sell more newspapers for the reasons mentioned previously, but it would increase communication with potential readers. Ultimately, the change might increase the credibility of the newspaper among minorities.

Other actions may bring more immediate improvement. Better delivery service and collection, possibly by mail, may sell marginal or borderline readers. Good service is probably more important than improved content.

Contests to involve high school students in writing would be helpful, along with reader participation programs designed to elicit comments from minorities.

The greatest promise of increased readership is offered by programs of any kind that will instill the newspaper reading habit in black youngsters in the schools. Newspaper in the Classroom programs are an example. Newspapers must attempt to develop the reading habit early. The habit will last a lifetime; the young reader will come to regard newspaper reading as a necessity. These programs require large expenditures of time and money, and the returns are far into the future.

In summary, the slum-dweller doesn't crave a daily newspaper. Nothing the newspaper does in the way of content change or writing style will develop a craving. Solving delivery and collection problems will do much to increase minority and inner-city readership. The best long-term investment is in-school programs that develop the newspaper reading habit early.

Newspaper in the Classroom: First Dividends on a Long-Term Investment

DIANE MacLEAN
Supervisor of Educational Services
Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association
Toronto, Ontario

The full potential of Newspaper in Education programs (formerly called Newspaper in the Classroom) is not always recognized. NIE can be a temporary expedient to obtain small circulation increases—or it can be a major component of a broader educational and cultural campaign that will ultimately yield much larger benefits.

If the NIE program is to succeed fully, several important steps must be taken before the newspapers are dropped at the schoolhouse door. The most important step of all is teaching the teachers how to use the newspaper, giving them an understanding of what newspapers are and what they are trying to accomplish.

A recent study conducted by the Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association showed that teachers who had attended NIE workshops have:

- More favorable general opinions about newspapers.
- More favorable opinions about the quality of news coverage by newspapers.
- Better agreement with editorial views of local newspapers.
- Better acceptance of all the media usage in education.
- More favorable attitudes toward newspapers as a teaching tool.

(Similar research done earlier by Copley International Corporation and Professor E. D. De Roche of Marquette University also indicated that teachers are the key to a successful NIE program.)

The same CDNPA study, however, showed that teachers are more favorably disposed toward television than newspapers, both as private

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Diane MacLean, a teacher by training, works closely with Canadian teachers, students and newspaper men and women to emphasize the importance of Newspapers in Education programs in Canada. She has been with CDNPA since 1974, having been a teacher and vice principal prior to then.

citizens and as teachers. This is a clear warning signal for newspapers, at least in Canada.

If training of teachers is so critical, what is the best way to do it?

A series of on-going workshops is best, not a one-day or even a one-week session once a year. Teachers will attend NIE workshops on their own time if they understand the nature of the workshops and how they will help them teach better. Ideally, the workshops should begin with a tour of the newspaper plant, followed by a meeting where the teachers can question top executives from all departments of the newspaper.

In conducting NIE workshops, these procedures and guidelines are recommended:

- Accept all questions from teachers as important, no matter how naive the question may seem to an experienced newspaper person. Many teachers have little understanding of a newspaper's function.
- The announcement of a workshop should be specific and detailed as to purpose and method. Teachers should be told, for example, that they will be instructed in how to use the newspaper in their social studies program (or any other program), that an educator (the newspaper's program coordinator) will direct the program, and that newspaper people will be on hand to answer questions.
- The newspaper should designate someone to follow up the workshop meetings and be available to answer further questions from teachers between workshops. On smaller newspapers this person may be the editor. On larger newspapers, it may be a full-time NIE coordinator. Many NIE coordinators are former teachers.
- Follow-up workshops can use to advantage a well known reporter or columnist. Advice on how to use the newspaper within various curricula is also helpful and welcome.

CDNPA has also been successful working with student teachers before they graduate from college, showing them how newspapers can be an effective teaching tool.

A newspaper can be used in the classroom on at least three different levels:

1. Teaching *about* the newspaper. This is probably the least effective in terms of developing reading habits. It is simply a discussion of what a newspaper is and probably is one unit within a much larger course. Therefore the newspaper is used for a limited period of time for a specific purpose. Teaching about the newspaper is most effective if part of a complete program.

2. Teaching *with* the newspaper. Most programs are structured in this manner. The newspaper is used to teach a variety of skills, issues, etc., at various times in the school year. It is a supplement to the teacher's curriculum.

3. Teaching conceptually; that is, using an integrated approach in which the newspaper reflects all aspects of life. This is the best approach. The newspaper becomes a vital part of the educational process and is used on a sustained basis in the classroom in all areas of the curriculum.

The third level is the most difficult to attain and workshops similar to those of CDNPA are necessary to develop such teaching strategies.

The cost of an NIE program will vary with the number of schools, number of newspapers, and whether the coordinator is full time or part time. Most small and middle-size dailies probably could start an NIE program for about $12,000 a year (without an educator on the newspaper staff, of course).

Newspapers with NIE programs must ask basic questions like these:

Who's in charge of the program? What should the specific duties of the coordinator be? How often should there be communication with the teachers? How many newspapers should be distributed per class? (The answer here depends on the expertise of the teacher and how the newspaper will be used; but initially every student should have a newspaper. One way to begin is with a "newspaper center" with ten newspapers for a class.)

In any event, newspaper management must be certain all departments are involved in the NIE program.

Several newspapers are looking beyond NIE to the logical extension of that program: Newspapers in the Home (NIH). NIH would be a program in which parents and children learn through the newspaper, either through special material related to the child's schoolwork or through instructions to parents on how to use the newspaper to teach concepts to pre-school children. Several newspapers—including those in Wichita and Minneapolis—are studying this kind of program. Some feel the newspaper—via an NIE program—reaches the child late, after heavy television viewing has set in and values, habits and attitudes have been formed.

A final point about the CDNPA survey deserves emphasis. The survey found that 97 per cent of the teachers surveyed used a newspaper at some time in their classes. Thus the newspaper is being used—with or without guidance. If newspaper managements do not guide teachers in the proper methods of using newspapers there is the risk they will be used improperly and potential readers will be lost, perhaps forever.

Graphics: The Untapped Resource

JACK BACKER
Associate Professor of Journalism
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

Newspaper readers—and potential readers—live in a design-conscious world. Millions of dollars are spent in designing buildings, clothes and other consumer products to attract people.

Now look at many newspapers: long columns of gray type, small photos, few—and often uninspired—graphic devices. Look even closer. Are the nameplates sharp and crisp or cluttered with information? Look at the logos and standing heads. Many have no continuity, no theme, from section to section. The reader, perhaps subconsciously, recognizes this and is disturbed.

Look at the news content. Readers have wants and needs. Wants include the gee-whiz feature, the human-interest tear-jerker, the in-depth story, the startling photograph, and the expected coverage of unexpected events and issues. Needs include the grocery ads, police news, hospital admissions, weather, classified ads, transfers, school lunch menus, etc.

Newspaper editors must learn their readers' wants and needs, then package the "needs" news so it can be found and digested easily.

An increasing number of people are deciding they don't need a daily newspaper but that does not mean they have given up reading. We have a great deal of evidence that 18-to-24-year-olds—and other age groups as well—are buying large amounts of reading material.

For example, paperback sales in 1975 amounted to $7 million. About 50 per cent of those sales were to 18-to-24-year-olds. Specialty magazines are also enjoying record sales. Paperbacks and magazines have well-designed covers, with eye-catching pictures, titles and headlines. The specialty magazines are well-designed, with attractive layouts, big pictures, easy-to-understand graphics and tightly written articles.

Jack Backer, who has worked on weeklies and small dailies in Iowa, Nebraska and Kansas, has been on the Indiana University faculty since 1969. He also serves as publisher of the Indiana University student newspaper and has served as a typographical consultant to several newspapers.

Now, go back to the newspaper. Look at the advertising in the newspaper. In many newspapers, the advertising is bad. Poorly designed ads can cause a loss of readers, the same as poorly written stories can. There can be a total of 272 different ad sizes on 8-column pages and 198 on 6-column pages. That's too many. There must come a time when we stylize ads and block them off in a neat, orderly fashion.

We are almost at the point where design in a newspaper is as important as content. An analogy might be that the atmosphere in a restaurant is almost as important as the food. Put good content in a well-designed package and then promote it in your newspaper, on radio, TV and in specialty publications.

We're fortunate that most people have the reading habit. Many newspapers are dull, disorganized and boring. But people read them because they have the reading habit.

As you look at a newspaper, here are some questions to ask:

- Why don't we use more and better graphics (charts, graphs, locator maps, etc.)? U.S. News and World Report is an excellent example of using graphics to explain complicated issues.
- What kind of visual impression does your newspaper project? Many headlines are too black, too bold, too garish. They scream at the reader. Is the body type large enough and easy to read? Do you use the best picture available or one much worse but which relates to the story it accompanies?
- Do your graphics retell the same story as the article or do they elaborate on the story? Are your graphics well conceived or thrown together as an afterthought?
- Why do we jump stories? (The St. Petersburg, Fla., Evening Independent has not jumped a story since 1963.) Nearly every readership survey shows a dropoff in readers when a story is jumped, yet most newspapers jump many stories, often to several different pages—sometimes to different sections.
- How is color used? Color is very effective in drawing readers to a story and an ad. Spot color also can be used effectively with graphics.
- What is the "ideal" front page? It should have 7 to 15 reading elements (including pictures, graphs, etc.), combining short and long pieces. The young reader wants a lot of information fast. We can help provide this with an easy-to-scan index and news summaries. Some newspapers put indexes on the front of every sec-

tion. (A recent readership survey showed 80 per cent of the Louisville Times' readers looked at the extensive Page One index and 67 per cent said they used it in reading the rest of the newspaper.)

Some other thoughts on newspapers:

- Continuity is important, but that doesn't mean there is no flexibility within a given format. The best way to achieve continuity is to have a style manual for the layout people. They should follow it like writers follow a style manual.
- Modular makeup is the best but you can combine horizontal and vertical blocks for a pleasing page.

In summary, here are four steps to a better newspaper:

1. Recognize that lifestyles have changed and that we live in a design-conscious age.

2. Remember that readers have wants and needs and the newspaper editors must package "needs" news so the reader can find it easily.

3. Design the newspaper properly. Better graphics can breed better content. Good newspaper design includes ads as well as news.

4. Promote the product.

A Tale of Two Videotapes

Professor Backer also showed two videotapes. One was a discussion with three newspaper readers: two Indiana University students (one male and one female) and a secretary married to an IU student. They were shown four different newspapers and asked to go through them, commenting on what they liked and disliked.

A 21-year-old man majoring in athletic training liked . . .

Color . . . horoscopes . . . tightly written short articles . . . bylines to help them identify the writer of the article . . . charts and graphs . . . news digests . . . local news . . . local sports.

A 21-year old woman majoring in fine arts liked . . .

Local news . . . color . . . movie reviews . . . weekend "things to do" guides.

A 19-year-old woman married to a college student liked . . .

Pictures . . . charts . . . color . . . ads, particularly ones with coupons . . . local news.

In all three cases, two items were mentioned: local news and color.

The second videotape was of three non- or occasional readers, discussing why they don't read newspapers. The three were the wife of a

journalism professor, a graduate student and a secretary to a staff member.

Some of the reasons they did not read included:

They are tired of reading "bad news" . . . not enough time . . . newspaper reporting is superficial . . . poor packaging . . . sensationalism . . . very little creative writing; too stylized.

* * *

The closing comment of one of the non-readers presents the biggest challenge to newspaper people. He said:

"I don't read a newspaper. I don't think I ever will. And there is no way you can package it to make me do so. There are too many other things in my life that are more important and that I'd rather spend my time with."

Backer concluded:

"I have to think he's wrong."

Seminar Round-Table Exchange

On the last day of the Seminar, members participated in a round-table exchange of techniques and philosophies that have helped their individual newspapers improve circulation penetration, expand reading time or build future readers. Here are excerpts from that round-table exchange.

On Writing for the Young

Phillip H. Aust, Associate Editor, South Bend Tribune (and author of six books for 10-to-15-year-old readers, three of which were Junior Literary Guild selections):

Don't write down to young readers; that will turn them off. Write as you would for an adult but thin out detail. Try for motion in the lead; concentrate on people doing things rather than describing objects. Younger readers particularly like good illustrations. For story ideas, look at high school papers. Many are writing about adult subjects: abortion, birth control, drugs, etc.

Diane MacLean, Supervisor of Educational Services, Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association (a former school teacher and vice principal):

"Young people are developing a healthy attitude toward human sexuality—and other so-called taboo subjects. At a young age, they are aware of what others might consider adult issues."

Impressions of Young Adults

Deborah Licklider, Living Editor, Sun-Bulletin and Press, Binghamton, New York:

A Young People's Task Force at the Binghamton newspapers surveyed a dozen young newsroom staffers. The Task Force then talked to other young people (ages 18 to 30) in the community to gather impressions about the Binghamton newspapers and newspapers in general.

Some findings:

- Newspapers are viewed as "establishment," much too conservative, and tending to spurn controversial subjects.
- Praise for the National Observer, a weekly newspaper that appeals to this age group.
- Specialty magazines have appeal because they help readers cope and improve their lifestyle.

- A feeling that newspapers must become more skeptical about society instead of always accepting everything. IBM offices in Binghamton (and elsewhere) carry THINK signs. The Task Force suggested that the Binghamton newspapers post DOUBT signs.

A conclusion: Young reporters and editors are in touch with young people; newspaper management should listen to them more often.

Resurgence of the National Spelling Bee

James H. Wagner, Editorial Promotion Director, Scripps-Howard Newspapers, and Director of the National Spelling Bee:

The National Spelling Bee has enjoyed remarkable gains since 1970. Wagner listed television exposure of the Spelling Bee in 1974 and 1975, a renewed emphasis in schools on the three Rs (and spelling), and "good old days" nostalgia created by the Bicentennial as possible causes for the resurgence.

He said newspaper sponsorship of a spelling bee probably will not increase circulation but will build good will. For a spelling bee to succeed, he said, newspapers must have the support of the local educational establishment.

On Reaching Apartment Dwellers

This problem varies by location. **Milton J. Merz**, Vice President/Operations, The Record, Hackensack, New Jersey, said his newspaper had higher penetration in apartments in its circulation area than in Bergen County (the county of publication) as a whole. The Record's circulation area has a number of upper-income, high-rise apartments.

Newspapers with concentrations of apartments have tried various approaches:

The Charlotte Observer and News produced a "Welcome to Our Neighborhood" kit. The kit is given to the Welcome Wagon, moving companies, apartment managers and banks, who give them to newcomers. The kit contains information about the community, a map, the two newspapers, and a subscription blank for both newspapers.

Mark Ethridge III, Assistant Metro Editor, Charlotte Observer, said, "Part of our circulation increase is coming from increased penetration in apartments through these kits."

The Courier-Journal and Louisville Times have various projects designed to increase apartment penetration, including:

1. Offering the newspaper free for a stated period if the reader consents to be interviewed in depth on likes and dislikes about the newspaper (content, delivery, etc.).

2. Working with an apartment manager association. The newspapers are association members and attend meetings.

3. Assigning one circulation department employee to visit managers of high-rises and apartment complexes and discuss problems.

"We found many of them didn't want us in there trying to sell subscriptions," said **Maurice J. Buchart, Jr.**, Vice President and Director of Sales of the Louisville newspapers. "The managers preferred in many instances to sign up people for our newspapers when they signed up for the apartment lease.

"They also gave us names of people who had moved in or moved out during the last 30 days, helping us immensely with our starts and stops.

"You need myriad ways to sell your newspaper in apartments. We simply ask the managers: how do *you* want it handled?"

St. Petersburg, Florida: "In some instances in this city, the apartment managers will bill the tenants for the Times or Evening Independent and send the newspapers a monthly check," said **Robert M. Stiff**, Editor, the Evening Independent.

Toronto: **Michael R. Feldman**, Marketing Manager, The Star. The Star is experimenting with newspaper racks that can be opened with coded cards similar to a credit card. These racks would be placed in hard-to-serve apartment buildings. The cards would be good for a stated period of time or day of the week.

People on the Move

Robert M. Stiff, Editor, the Evening Independent, St. Petersburg:

"We subscribe to a national service tied in with moving companies. As soon as the moving company learns someone is moving to St. Pete, we are notified and we send free copies of both newspapers for two weeks. We follow up shortly after new residents arrive in town. Of those sampled, 27 per cent continued to take at least one of the newspapers."

Newsroom Response to Marketing Advice

This is a sensitive area, involving both reader research by the marketing department and traditional newsroom insight and the extent to which market research helps in editorial decisions.

The following questions were proposed by **Michael R. Feldman**, Marketing Manager, Toronto Star:

"Are newrooms structured properly to respond to marketing advice and requests? For example, if it is decided that the Saturday edition should be delivered earlier (to meet a need determined by the

marketing department), can the newsroom adjust its copy flow and deadlines to respond? If a marketing survey discovers that the front page of the newspaper should contain eight to ten stories instead of the three to four it is currently carrying, will the newsroom go along with it? Should the editorial department be responsible for achieving circulation objectives?"

The consensus of Seminar members was that editorial personnel should be more *aware* of marketing and circulation needs and problems. In particular, news editors, city editors and copy desk chiefs should get to know the circulation department staff and impress upon the newsroom the critical importance of printing the newspaper on schedule.

Perry E. Morgan, Publisher, Virginian-Pilot and Ledger-Star, Norfolk, concurred in the importance of interdepartmental cooperation and the marketing concept but added:

"The glint on the product that catches the reader's eye has still got to come from the editorial department, and I'm not at all certain that there is sufficient communication within the news department and sufficient thought being given to those ideas that will make a newspaper gleam. It's one thing to say that a reader would like to read more about a certain subject; it's another thing to present that material in such a fashion that the newspaper will really appeal to a reader . . ."

Judith D. Hines, Manager/Educational Services, American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation, Reston, Virginia.

"Most of your states either have or are considering adopting functional literacy minimum standards for your high school graduates. And most of those include certain minimal levels of reading the newspaper because this has to do with survival once they get out. The Baltimore Sun, for one, is working with the state school system to work the newspaper into the various levels of education that will lead to the kids passing these tests. This is a fantastic opportunity for newspapers to relate to what kids come out of school being able to do."

Newspaper Format Changes

Barry Bingham, Jr., Editor and Publisher, The Courier-Journal and Louisville Times, on format changes:

A newspaper that changes format should not ram the new format down the readers' throats if it becomes clear that a mistake has been made.

"A dramatic example of this is Scene, our Saturday afternoon Louisville Times. The newspaper is wrapped inside a tabloid-sized, color-gravure cover magazine called Scene. The first copy hit the street in March 1971. Much of it was as it appears now; however, the news section then was a tabloid. We received massive complaints . . . After a couple of months, we made the news section a standard size, and many of the complaints vanished.

"The circulation is now 24,500 more than the weekday average of The Times. What happened, I think, is unique in American journalism. This was a dying publication and it is now our strongest (Times) of the week."

Before Scene began in 1971, the Saturday afternoon edition had 8,000 lines of display advertising. Today it has 20,000 lines.

Of its 24,500 in additional circulation, more than 14,000 are street sales. And 8,000 of the new 10,000 home-delivered copies are being delivered on Saturday *only*. Why Saturday only?

Maurice J. Buchart, Jr., Vice President and Director of Sales for the Louisville newspapers:

"We wanted to see if our circulation department can develop into handling a single-day delivery. Newspapers must develop systems for getting the newspaper to the reader when *he* wants it, not when *we* want to give it to him."

Several newspapers represented in the Seminar had undergone format changes within the past three years. One was The Record, a 150,000-circulation evening newspaper published in Bergen County, New Jersey. **Bernard J. (Buddy) Buranelli**, Deputy Managing Editor, said the newspaper established the following guidelines when it adopted a new format in April 1976:

- Artists, not editors, will be involved in all areas of design that call for their talents. (The newspaper has eight artists.)
- The production department will cooperate in fulfilling design and layout needs.
- The block style ad layouts will be used to square off columns and produce modular space for news-editorial copy.

- Design changes will be monitored to be certain they meet established standards of consistency and style.

Milton J. Merz, Vice President/Operations, The Record:

"What prompted the change was not that we were having a problem. The attitude of the publisher, Malcolm A. Borg, has been that the newspaper is not a static thing, and that we should continue to try to make improvements in it."

One of the most popular new features is a detailed Bergen County weather forecast and report prepared especially for The Record by a meteorologist.

Charles M. (Chuck) Hauser, Vice President and Executive Editor, The Providence Journal and The Evening Bulletin:

"If you want to try exciting, different things in design, the Saturday paper is an excellent place to do it. Then you don't risk upsetting a lot of regular readers through the week."

When the Louisville Times changed its Saturday format, it dropped the Saturday editorial page. **Barry Bingham, Jr.**, Editor and Publisher, told why:

"We felt nobody was reading it. If we had received 1,000 letters saying, 'We need your moral guidance on Saturday afternoons,' we probably would have put it back. We received only one letter of protest.

"In any change, the most important thing is to tell your readers you are going to make some changes and why. Be honest with readers. You'll get some crank letters, but you get those anyway."

Encouraging Reader Access

Robert M. Stiff, Editor, Evening Independent, St. Petersburg:

"We run a 'My View' column daily on our editorial page. We sought out 30 people from a variety of backgrounds—education, labor, business, medicine, etc.—and asked them to write on anything they wished to. We set deadlines and keep the columns to 500 words. We pay them nothing. We sign them up for three months at a time—with each person writing one column a month for three months—and then review them at the end of three months. Some run dry quickly or are unable to meet our deadlines. We then find others to replace them. Surveys show these columns are almost as well read as the letters to the editor. The columns all deal with local issues and appear with a head shot of the author."

William P. Maurer, City Editor, Des Moines Tribune:

"We decided on seeking Saturday guest editorials from the community. They have brightened our Saturday editorial page format. Guest editorials make good reading."

Barry Bingham, Jr., Editor and Publisher, The Courier-Journal and Louisville Times:

"Our problem on the editorial page was on Monday. No one wanted to work Sunday on Monday editorials. So we turned over the Monday morning Courier-Journal editorial page to letters to the editor. We let them run longer—some 500 or 600 words long—and we found good readership with the letters."

Perry E. Morgan, Publisher, Virginian-Pilot and Ledger-Star in Norfolk:

"We have to engage all our reporters in the old-fashioned discipline of producing some ideas themselves and find means to make sure that young people on our staffs have some input into what kind of newspapers we're putting out. We need them to challenge the department heads about what they've been doing for the past 20 years."

Providing Total Market Coverage

Don E. Carter, President and Publisher, The Lexington Herald and The Lexington Leader, outlined his new publication, Bluegrass Today, a free weekly supplement delivered as an insert to all non-subscribers to provide saturation coverage:

"We decided that we were not penetrating enough of our market. Advertisers were telling us they had no way except mail to deliver inserts and other material in our eight-county retail trading zone. We decided that we could offer 100% saturation. We computerized our circulation lists and developed a list of all non-subscribing households to either the morning or afternoon newspaper. We then told the advertisers we can offer you 100% saturation. We said, 'we're going to start a separate, free-distribution publication called *Bluegrass Today*; if you will sign enough contracts for pickup advertising out of our regular newspaper, we will put this in a print package with some soft news content and distribute it once a week to every single subscriber in our area. We will also put in any inserts zoned the way you want them and price it to you on a scale that will be profitable to us.'

"It is highly successful. We are finding that retailers are willing to put big dollars into 100% penetration. We are finding that non-readers of our regular newspapers are responding pretty well from the advertising point of view to the advertising messages.

"We also are finding that this is a method of distributing things other than magazines. For instance, we could very easily switch into utility bills if the federal government allows us to, or we could move into small packages of one kind or another or the kinds of things moved by Post Offices.

"We cannot do it 100% with our carrier force; certain areas in our retail trading zone are reached only by mail subscribers. So we've had to get into a fairly complete computation of what the delivery costs of this thing are. For mail, it costs almost eight cents a copy. So we deliver as much of it as we can by carrier. Costs vary according to density. It averages four cents a copy . . . We have come out with a profit every week since we started."

Delivering New Products

Barry Bingham, Jr., Editor and Publisher, The Courier-Journal and The Louisville Times, on his newspapers' experimental delivery of Time and Newsweek:

"Its success depends largely on the ability of the carrier task force to handle it . . . Time and Newsweek have an academic copy, a business copy, etc. We have found our carriers are capable of sorting out which is which and delivering them to the right household. We have not had a single complaint from any subscriber to Time and Newsweek about the delivery. That says to us that this little kid is a lot smarter than we thought he was, and he may be able to deliver four or five different kinds of newspapers, too. That's what we're banking on.

(With different kinds of newspapers), "we won't be giving people information they don't want; for example, we won't be giving lists of stock markets to people who have never owned a share of stock. We'll be giving them a product more tailored to their personal interests and needs. They'll have an easier time getting through it, and we'll conserve resources while we are at it . . .

"There are all kinds of crazy things you can do. One thing we're considering is running a page of abstracts of news stories. You write in and say, 'I want numbers one, three and seven, and my check for 75 cents is enclosed,' and we'll copy it and mail it to you.

"I don't know exactly how it's going to be done; I'm just convinced that in the future we're going to be providing people more information they want and less information they don't want."

Writing Improvement Programs

Providence (R.I.) Journal and The Evening Bulletin: Formal writ-

ing classes are conducted for four or five staff members at a time. The sessions are led by one of the newspapers' editors and are directed toward the better writers and reporters.

Louisville Courier-Journal and Times: Management has brought in outside writers—including novelist C. P. Snow and syndicated Columnist James J. Kilpatrick—to conduct writing seminars for the staff.

Reading Achievement Test Scores

Don E. Carter, President and Publisher, The Lexington Herald and The Lexington Leader: "Publish the results. We have an obligation to tell our readers what's happening in the school as far as reading is concerned."

"But be careful," warned **Diane MacLean,** Supervisor of Educational Services, Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association, and a former teacher.

"There has to be a great degree of responsibility in how that information is conveyed to the reader. It's not a simple problem, and there are no simple answers. We have to think of the test involved and whether it is measuring the ability of the children. Is the test adequate for this particular time? Have the norms been reevaluated? What kind of other services are provided by the district? When is the curriculum evaluated? Are the materials updated? Why are the kids turned off? It's such a complex issue that I think a great deal of time should be spent explaining the program.

"Publishing the test scores without adequate explanation would upset a great many people and confuse them . . ."

Ways to Approach the Educational Story

Michael R. Feldman, Marketing Manager, The Toronto Star.

"The Star held an open community forum. The public debate was reported, as one way of bringing the problems to the public forum and

Ken Botty, Managing Editor, The Evening Gazette, Worcester, Massachusetts.

"We sponsor a Scholar's Night once a year. All the secondary schools, both public and private, in our circulation area select their top scholar. Then, every May, we (the newspaper) sponsor a dinner for the kids and their parents. Our reporters and editors attend also. We have received excellent public response."

reporting various viewpoints in the newspaper. If the issue is complex, then it's our responsibility to explain it."

Barry Bingham, Jr., Editor and Publisher, The Courier-Journal and The Louisville Times.

"If you have a reporter who has a teaching certificate, I would advise you to get him or her to go into the school system as a replacement teacher. We had a woman who did that for about three months and she came back and wrote the damndest series of articles I've ever read about education. They were not based one bit on statistics, merely her day-to-day experience.

"Secondly, we've been able to get some of our city and county school systems' test scores for every school. We have published the test scores for each grade and each school and reported whether the scores are going up or down. Admittedly, that's a lot of numbers. We try to give explanatory information. But I just think having the information that the fifth-graders in the school that your child goes to are doing worse or better this year in math, English and whatever the other test subjects are, is important information."

Ken Botty, Managing Editor, The Evening Gazette, Worcester, Massachusetts.

"The (test score) figures are important, but you have got to talk to the operating teacher. And it's very difficult. You have to cultivate your sources among the teachers. You have to give them the courage so they can go on the record because they are in a situation where many times they are coming out against the administration.

"For example, this open-classroom business. Newspapers have not recorded it because they can't get at it. We have four staff members whose wives teach—my wife was a teacher for a time. All are unanimous that the open classroom is a disaster because it deprives certain children. And yet I read piece after piece in our own paper—from administrators—on what a marvelous teaching experience it is. So, you have to get to the teachers; you have to get down to the classroom.

"I've got a couple of reporters with teaching certificates and I'm considering giving one a year off from the paper. I want him to go teach and then come back and do a series on what's going on in the classroom in the mid-1970s."

Reaching the Non-Reader

Glenn E. Hanna, Assistant to the Marketing Director, The Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company.

"We gave away four pages of space before the 1976-77 school year to provide a list of adult-education courses in the Minneapolis public

schools. That has gained us access—with our circulation department and promotion people—to 27 adult-education programs three times during the school year. We talk with people taking the courses and enroll them in our home-delivery program if they desire. We also have been able to put our newspaper into 17 specially constructed courses for adult basic education. All this came as a result of one telephone call from our newspaper to a school official."

James W. Holton, Jr., Assistant General Manager, The State and The Columbia Record, South Carolina.

"A Teach 'n Tote kit developed by Mrs. Barbara Ashley, reading supervisor of the South Carolina Department of Education adult-education program, has had phenomenal success in teaching adults to read and write. More than 800 of the kits have been distributed at $10 each in South Carolina and across the country."

On Copying Other Programs

King Durkee, Director, Department of Education, Copley Newspapers, La Jolla, California.

"There are as many Newspaper in the Classroom programs as there are newspapers. They vary; they should vary. The best way to develop one is to work with local school people, the curriculum writers if possible. Tell them what you are looking for and have your reporters and editors work with them to plan the program. Pay them if need be; the long-term benefit will more than offset your costs."

Producing the Newspaper on Time

Robert M. Stiff, Editor, Evening Independent, St. Petersburg, Florida.

"In an attempt to find out why readers stopped having our papers delivered, we put a post-card questionnaire in our papers in the racks. We asked: 'Did you ever have either The Times or Evening Independent delivered to your home? If so, why did you stop?' Fifty-seven per cent of the stops were due to delivery problems. We decided to go to press 30 minutes earlier. That 30 minutes has cut our circulation complaints by 50 per cent. The Evening Independent now gets to the home no later than 4 p.m."

Charles M. Hauser, Vice President and Executive Editor, The Providence Journal and The Evening Bulletin:

"Delivery time is absolutely crucial, whether it's newsstand or home delivery. Marketing people and circulation need to set the times, and the newsroom must adhere to them. Circulation is just as interested in the latest deadlines as the newsroom is."

Early Editions Vs. Late News

Maurice J. Buchart, Jr., Vice President and Director of Sales, The Courier-Journal and The Louisville Times, on the Times' experiment with an early edition in one section of its circulation area:

"We decided to see if we could determine whether people wanted the paper early or with the latest news. After six months, it appears they want it early. The Times gets to their home as early as noon and no later than 2:30 p.m., and circulation is up 6,500 (to 40,000) since we started it earlier this year. This is primarily a blue-collar area with working people who go to work early and come home early."

The Dayton newspapers provide news tip sheets for their circulation department personnel. If circulation people see something they think will be of interest, they jot it down and send it to the newsroom when they return to the office. (From **Robert H. Musselman, Jr.**, Business Manager.)

The Need for Working Closely with Journalism Schools

King Durkee was asked in advance of the Seminar to survey the problems of journalism schools. This is the resulting exchange with other members of the Seminar.

King Durkee, Director, Department of Education, Copley Newspapers.

I asked some three dozen of my colleagues from journalism schools to give me information I might use today.

Let me be a composite journalism school dean. I will answer you in their words. Don't be gentle; I am not going to be gentle with you.

Question: How can you turn somebody out into an industry when you know that in three or four years there's only going to be one job available for every four graduates?

Durkee: I can't keep kids from coming to my school.

Question: Do you warn them?

Durkee: Yes, generally. Journalism professors are pretty careful

about it. A mob means increases in budgets and journalism professors know that. But your state press association could demand entrance tests for journalism school as law or medical schools do.

Question: Why don't you have a general manager or publisher teach a course on newspaper management so the students can get the real picture of what the newspaper is?

Durkee: You have no idea how many times they have told me, "No, I'm too busy." Urge your colleagues to volunteer to speak to college journalism classes. Journalism professors would welcome you.

Question: Are you encouraging people to specialize in copy desk work?

Durkee: Yes. A lot of young people now want to be copy editors.

Question: Why don't you teach students to operate a typewriter or a keyboard?

Durkee: You people holler about the people you get. How many of you phone me and ask, "Is this a good man or woman?" Most of you do not even ask.

Question: Why do most journalism schools place emphasis on degrees rather than professional training when structuring their faculties?

Durkee: The academic community forces it. They're protecting themselves.

Question: If I call the dean and ask if a job candidate can read and write the English language, could he honestly tell me?

Durkee: He can tell you that he (the candidate) can write it a hell of a lot better than your entering people did 20 years ago and that he probably could spell better and that you just don't remember that.

Question: What does someone who wants to be a reporter learn in two years of journalism school that he doesn't learn in a year in a newsroom?

Durkee: He doesn't learn the bad habits that you're going to let him be exposed to in that first year. Aside from that, I rather doubt that you're going to talk with him about law of the press or how you read a budget or how you cover a courtroom.

Question: Doesn't he learn that as soon as you send him to cover it?

Durkee: He learns it pretty miserably.

Question: How many of the great reporters went to journalism school?

Durkee: What do you want them to have, a good liberal arts education? There's only one place on a college campus where you can get that today, and that's journalism school. Journalism professors want to prepare a student for the beginning training you give him.

Question: Are your brighter graduates, especially blacks, being increasingly attracted to television, and, if so, why?

Durkee: Money.

Question: As simple as that?

Durkee: Yes. We don't have that many blacks in journalism schools. You find one good black and everybody in the country wants him. Magazines want him, television stations want him, and they pay outrageous salaries to get him.

Question: Why can't you instill some realistic attitudes and working habits in your journalism graduates?

Durkee: I can't remember a time when there were more practical people who want to work hard and who just want a chance.

Durkee's Concluding Remarks: We've got to come back to the journalism schools and tell them what we want them to do. They really need your help. Give it to them.

A Perspective: No Single Answer

ROBERT M. STIFF
Editor
The Evening Independent
St. Petersburg, Florida

The most amazing thing happened when 33 people got together for an unusual three-day seminar at the American Press Institute in Reston, Virginia, to discuss "The Newspaper And Tomorrow's Readers."

Not one person asked why Johnny can't read. In fact, his name never came up even though he is part of the problem.

We were more interested in the larger question of why newspaper readership is declining across the country.

Those of us seeking the truth that would set us all free were a mixed bag of editors, publishers, advertising and sales directors, vice presidents, general managers, promotion directors, marketing managers, research directors and reading experts.

The answer, of course, is that there is no single answer. It is more likely a series of small answers that will vary in verity from city to city.

I have not had time to completely sift through the mountain of material and notes I collected on the Seminar, but I did come away with some thoughts that were shaped by what I heard at API.

First, the Newspaper in the Classroom program (soon to be renamed Newspaper in Education) is essential to our future. The rising cost of newsprint and the economic downturn have caused some of us to downgrade this effort, but it is a false savings if we've made our cuts here.

From ages 2-18, a child spends 17,500 hours sitting in the classroom and 18,000 hours sitting in front of a television set. Pre-schoolers spend an average of 54.3 hours per week watching TV.

That child is accustomed to color, a sense of motion, lots of big graphics, humor and entertainment. He gets that with a simple push of a button in his living room.

Look at your own staid black and white newspaper with its columns of gray type, shrunken comic strips, ponderously written long stories and small photographs to discover why that youngster thinks reading is a chore he'd prefer to avoid.

This article by Robert M. Stiff, a member of the Seminar, first appeared in the APME News. It is reprinted by permission.

Newspaper reading is a habit. Once that habit is established, it probably will last for a lifetime. That was the self-serving reason we first became interested in Newspaper in the Classroom, and it is the same reason we ought to pursue it even more diligently today with improved content and design.

Trying to entice today's child with yesterday's dull, gray newspapers and textbooks won't make it.

We must help the educators show youngsters that reading can be exciting, rewarding and fun. We need to have an educator on our staff to conduct workshops for teachers that show them how a newspaper can be used in the classroom to teach almost every subject in the curriculum.

Then we need to go back and teach them again because good salesmanship requires good followup.

A survey by the Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association shows we can win over those teachers who can win over their students to the printed word if we make the effort.

This survey showed teachers, as a group, considered TV to be most reliable, most credible, best in public service and gaining the most in credibility. They rated newspapers as the hardest to believe, the most annoying and losing the most credibility. Not a pretty picture.

But here is the silver lining I promised you. Those teachers who attended Newspaper in the Classroom workshops FAVORED newspapers over TV in every positive category.

They also preferred newspapers over TV as a classroom teaching tool even though both mediums are equally available to them for use.

That tells me that those who know us and use us are more likely to love us. And that perception of newspapers and reading will be passed along to the youngsters we'll be seeking as paying customers in a few years.

Newspaper penetration has dropped from 71% to 61% in eight years for the 18-24 age group. That's 2½-million people we are missing. In that same period, overall readership declined 4% for all age groups.

Declining penetration, in fact, shows up in every age group to age 65. So when we miss the mark with youngsters, we miss reaching significant numbers of them as they grow older, too.

It is not that we are creating vast new numbers of hard-core nonreaders. Erosion of readership has mostly to do with the frequency of reading. About 3 of 4 adults read a newspaper yesterday, but 9 of 10 read a newspaper within the last five days.

That indicates we are not essential to large numbers of people. They'll look at us from time to time, but they don't believe their lives

are incomplete if they haven't bought us to see what we're doing today.

These folks ARE reading; they're just not all reading us. They're buying paperbacks in record numbers, the so-called underground press and vertical publications appealing to particular subjects.

Surveys show young readers in particular favor humor, entertainment, personalities, success stories, Dear Abby, how-to-cope stories, comics, fiction, astrology, how-to-do-it pieces and sensational news.

They dislike long current events stories, too many jumps, jumps that are hard to find, stale news, dull and meaningless advances and followups on government meetings, and confusing formats.

I suspect those likes and dislikes are common to all age groups. You'll have to judge your own newspaper's content and design to see how you fare.

If you decide to make any significant changes, then promote the hell out of it so people will know you've changed. Our promotion budgets, in per cent of sales, are probably smaller than in any other major sales industry.

This is a highly subjective sampling of the information made available to us at API.

My primary reason for agreeing to write this piece was not to convince you that my perception of these facts and opinions is correct for you. It is a hope that you'll be stirred to think about the problem and do what IS right for you.

But please, let's do something.

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